

September 27, 2021

Dear Professor Mumtaz Ali,

We are writing to propose a lasting intellectual and pedagogical partnership between the Islam Actuel Institute and the International Islamic University of Malaysia, specifically the Department of Usûl al-Dîn and Comparative Religion.

Islam Actuel is an institute that aims to make the Qur'an and the Islamic worldview work in the fields of academic study and in daily activities. In this sense, we are in line with the problematic and research program of Islamization of Knowledge.

We wish for our two institutions to benefit mutually by developing Islam as Worldview and universal Wisdom. At the moment, this is what we have to offer:

- Synthesize and translate publications by professors and intellectuals who inspire the IIUM and that we can use in our 5-year training program;
- Select and encourage French and Maghrebi students to come and pursue their studies and research at IIUM.

This is what IIUM and your Department of Usûl al-Dîn and Comparative Religion can bring us :

- The initiation to Islam as a worldview, source of knowledge and universal wisdom (through texts and interventions);
- The initiation to an Islamic Methodology of Research (through texts and interventions);
- Pedagogical advice to help the Islam Actuel Institute to design a 5-year training program, inspired by the approach of Ismail al-Faruqi but lightened, considering the particular French context;
- The organization of a Summer School with approximately thirty French and Maghrebi Muslim students in 2022.

I hope that this proposal finds a favorable response.
I remain at your disposal for any need that might arise.

Sincerely,



Mohamed Oudihat
Director of Islam Actuel Institute (Paris)
10 Rue de l'Industrie
75013 Paris, France

September 27, 2021

Dear Professor Mumtaz Ali,

The Islam Actuel Institute extends its gratitude for your timely interventions during our annual Summer School in August 2021 on the following themes:

1. Critical thinking: An Islamic Perspective
2. Crisis in Knowledge and Education
3. Need for Rethinking Knowledge and Education
4. Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan — 1982 and 1989
5. New Perspective for Education
6. Rethinking Modern Science

We hope that we will be able to renew our collaboration in the near future.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Oudihat
Director of Islam Actuel Institute (Paris)
10 Rue de l'Industrie
75013 Paris, France

The Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan, 1982 and 1989

In light of the views of Islamic scholars and leaders, Allah SWT enabled Professor Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, with his life-long Islamic commitment and clarity of vision, to formulate and launch the work plan for the Islamization of Knowledge [IOK].

As a direct result, the International Institute of Islamic Thought [IIIT] was established. It undertook the task to investigate the philosophical and epistemological bases as well as the theoretical and practical implications of Islamizing knowledge. Later the international Islamic universities in Dhaka, Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, Kampala, and Niger were set up to teach from the perspective of IOK. These universities promoted research on various aspects of the Islamization thesis and its work plan.

Along with this, Professor Syed Ali Ashraf established the Islamic Academy and started publication of the *Muslim Education Quarterly*. Scholars and activists of the Islamization of Knowledge movement made it clear from the very beginning that the goal of the Islamization of Knowledge was not sectarian. It is the dream of the Ummah for the revival of spirit of humanity and human civilization based on Tawhidic worldview. It should be taken as the agenda of the Ummah and humanity as a whole. One can disagree with its strategy, methodology or even priority, but no one should create any confusion about its being the concern of the Ummah. Hence, it was said:

Of the diverse alien slogans raised in the long history of the *ummah*, there are two—one of “westernisation” and the other of “modernization”—that are prominent. It is high time that we march ahead and unfurl the banner of “Islamization.” This goal is ingrained in the very conscience of the *ummah* and emanates from the very depths of its being. It must, therefore, be right to regard “Islamization” as the goal of the *ummah* and of all its constituents.[31]

It was also asserted that the Islamization of Knowledge does not mean in any way that any other priority is neglected or overlooked. The Islamization of Knowledge is a part of the overall scheme for the revival of Islam and Islamic civilization.

The Islamization of Knowledge represents only one aspect of the broader process of Islamization. In its entirety, the Islamization of Knowledge is a comprehensive, normative framework for individuals and society, for thought and action, for education and practice, for knowledge and organization, for the rulers and the ruled, for this world and for the world to come. By Islamizing all aspects of human life, a Muslim seeks the pleasure of Allah [SWT].[32]

However, it should be understood clearly from the very outset that the goals of Islamization of Knowledge and the Islamic movement more broadly can not be achieved unless energetic and visionary new thought is developed. The Islamization of Knowledge is in an early stage vis-a-vis the issue of thought. The issue of thought requires an evolution in thought and its methodology.

Therefore, the issue of Islamization of Knowledge is not only an issue of Islamic thought, but rather an issue of the underlying methodology of Islamic thought. It was forcefully argued that the decline in the *ummah* was caused by the decline of Islamic thought and that Islamic thought became stagnant because of methodological flaws.

To develop Islamic thought we need to develop the methodology of Islamic thought. In this way a meaningful relationship between the Islamization of Knowledge, Islamic thought, and the methodology of Islamic thought was explained. Now it should be clear to everybody that the Islamization of Knowledge is a multifaceted issue.

Islamization of knowledge “aims at reinvigorating Islamic thought and its methodology by giving it access to the main fountainheads of the legacy of the *ummah*. Likewise, its purpose is to achieve mastery of Islamic thought in various branches of human knowledge [social, physical or practically applied] in order to build a sound contemporary Islamic base for dynamic action in all spheres of life and civilization....it means that we should give due attention to the provision of various spiritual and material resources for reformation in the intellectual sphere...It is important to remember that, without reformation of thought and methodology and in the absence of genuine and clear vision, all efforts are bound to be ineffective and all sacrifices to be useless. This is how the civilization of Islam and those before it grew and progressed.[33]

Muslim intellectuals, thinkers, academicians, and leaders have used the establishment of the IIIT and the launching of AJISS to foster thought concerning the revival of the Islamic sciences and the development of needed theories and models. Previously, there was no journal or institution dedicated to the Islamization of Knowledge.

Now, however, scholars are able to make use of the material published in AJISS and Muslim Education Quarterly for classroom lectures and academic discussion. These means are helping to quicken the process of the Islamization of Knowledge. Now it is up to the individuals to benefit from this. It was further said:

The Islamization of knowledge process would enhance the intellectual frontiers of Muslims. Islamic creativity, Islamic contribution, and the full realization of “Islamization” in the being of the *ummah* and its civilizational direction will follow the command and mastery of the fundamentals of Islam

and Islamic legacy along with a through acquaintance with modern sciences...It is the duty of the creative Muslim intellect, and of the genuine Muslim thinker to quicken this pace on the road of inquiry and self-preparation; to rectify the damage suffered by the Islamic civilization during the long period of its backwardness; and to excel in these sciences, knowledge, civilization and transformation, thereby opening far wider horizons than ever before reached by humanity and modern science.[34]

The Islamization of Knowledge is now defined in different ways by different scholars. But, in spite of varying views about the Islamization of Knowledge, all agree that modern Western knowledge cannot be adopted by Muslims as it is. It must be Islamized for our own use and purposes. Danjuma A. Maiwada contended that:

It is pertinent to attempt to make a definition of “Islaimization” and “Islamization of knowledge” at the very out set. Islamization is the transformation of a worldview from one that is “crooked” or *jahil* (ignorant) to one that is Islamic. This transformation has manifested itself time and again through a succession of prophets and messengers of God and culminated in the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. When the Arabian Peninsula was gripped in the darkness of the *Jahilliyya*—the period of ignorance, lawlessness, brutality, and fear—Islam came as a light. It began with the first revelation of the Qur’an to the Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h.) commanding him to “Read in the name of your Lord.” Knowledge, therefore, is the first and most significant aspect of Islam as God, by his revelation of the Holy Qur’an, has sought to guide mankind to the right path. The significance of knowledge is that it is only when people know and can distinguish between right and wrong; that they can establish justly balanced

society and be the representatives of their Lord, God, on earth—which is mankind’s mission.[35]

From this simple definition of Islamization it is quite clear that the Islamization of Knowledge is synonymous with Islamization. Islamization must precede knowledge, and without knowledge there is no Islam; hence the revelation of the Holy Qur’an. But Islam is not just theory; it goes hand in hand with practice. During the initial revelation, whatever was revealed to mankind by God through the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was soon implemented by the Prophet and his companions.

Even now, every Muslim is obliged to study the Qur’an and the Prophet’s *Sunnah*. He must comprehend them and act in accordance with their guidance. Muslims are supposed to establish a properly balanced community in the same way as the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, did in Madinah, embracing all aspects of life—the spiritual, moral, social, economic, and political.

By the term “Islamization of Knowledge,” I seek to emphasize the fact that the transformation of knowledge from its initial form to one consistent with Islam is the most significant milestone in Islamization. This is clearly related to the broader goal of changing a Muslim society that has gone astray to a completely Islamic one. Taha Jabir al-Alwani defined Islamization as follows:

The Islamization of knowledge undertaking seeks to develop an Islamic paradigm of knowledge that will serve as an alternative to the secular positivist paradigm that presently dominates the arts and sciences. Such an alternative combines Islamic and universalistic perspectives; addresses the intellectual and conceptual problems of all humanity, not just of Muslims; and includes a tawhid-base reconstruction of the concepts of life, humanity and the universe.[36]

Alwani further said:

The Islamization of knowledge means involvement in intellectual pursuits, by examination, summarization, correlation, and publication, from the perspective of an Islamic outlook on life, man, and the universe [37] *in the context of changing circumstances.* [the emphasis one is added by me]

A working definition of “Islamization” is provided by M. Raziuddin Siddiqi as follows:

The term Islamization is understood here to mean that the concept, principles and methodology that are needed to organize and develop the system of knowledge should be in conformity with the spirit of Islam and the epistemology derived from the Qur'an... Thus the object of Islamization is to capture the ‘fairy’ of *ilm* and *hikmah*, i.e., science and technology, to make it our own, to master it and make great advance in it, and to apply it for the benefit of humanity....[38]

EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

In a recent book on Ismail al-Faruqi, ideological father of Islamization of knowledge, published and released in 2021, the editor says:

Professor al-Faruqi has left behind a school of thought known as the Islamization of knowledge, which operates at the level of university education at several Islamic universities around the globe. His school of thought,

academic approach and practice is also being applied by hundreds of his students teaching and doing research at different universities around the globe.

The same editor writes:

Faruqi exhorted his students, to be dedicated Muslims, committed to the upliftment of the *ummah* which was in dire strait on all fronts from educational to social and political. He dedicated all his efforts in roving around the world giving lectures on elevation of the Muslim condition. He saw his students as those who will carry out this task upon the completion of their studies and returning to their counties.

It was argued during the 1960s under: due to the overwhelming influence of the so-called successful paradigm of rationalism and positivism, a lot of Third world thinkers had grew up with the conviction that in order to achieve the development in political, economic and intellectual domains we need to follow the way of the secular West which was adopted in the West during modern period. They thought this will guarantee change and reform in their societies. [3].

Most of people in the Third World had lost their confidence in their local traditions and paradigms. Almost all communities of the third world had become the victim of positivist paradigm.

People had perceived life, society, and the world and the role of humanity elaborated by the theories of rationalism, positivism and relativism.

Taha Jabir al-Alwani, one of the strong supporters of IOK, says “Muslims had taken upon themselves to reconcile the Western vision of life, humanity, and the universe with their own or to reconcile the Islamic vision of the same with the precepts of the Western vision [4]”.

The same views are once again echoing in the Muslim circles around the world demonstrating the crisis of the Muslim mind and lack of intellectual creativity.

Instead of elaborating a contemporary Islamic paradigm of knowledge, they are asking for mediation and reconciliation. The emergence of the phrase of Integration of knowledge rather than Islamization of knowledge represents the lack of creativity, clarity of vision and commitment. In fact, the entire matter of IOHK, which requires sacrifices and long term planning, creativity and hope, has been turned down,

Against this background, Faruqi had suggested the strategy of IOK for change, reform and development in knowledge and education.

What is the need of the hour is to formulate the parameters of a truly Islamic paradigm of knowledge. Elaborating this issue Taha Jabir al-Alwani says:

The Islamization of Knowledge undertaking seeks to develop an Islamic paradigm of knowledge that will serve as an alternative to the secular positivist paradigm that presently dominates the arts and sciences [4]". This expected alternative paradigm should serve the needs of humanity. It will become possible if *Tawhid*-based reconstruction of the concepts of life, humanity and the universe is materialized successfully.

The Islamic view of knowledge has to take the concept of *Tawhid*, the truth and reality of this world, in all branches of knowledge, as its starting point for the entire edifice of the Islamic paradigm of knowledge. The *Tawhid* is the foundation of Epistemology.

All the epistemological aspects of *Tawhid* begin with the names and nature of the attributes of Allah SWT Allah SWT possesses the absolute knowledge and He teaches man which he does not know.

Allah SWT not only created man but endowed with the faculties and of aptitude to read, learn, write, and articulate. Hence, ethically and morally man is bound to be grateful to Allah swt

Allah SWT instilled within people a natural sense of curiosity to know about themselves and the universe.

Allah SWT appointed, a number of messengers, to transfer knowledge to humanity, which He granted to them through the process of revelation regarding the matters, both metaphysical and physical, of life, society and the world.

Allah SWT made it possible for human beings to make use of the entire physical world for the benefit of common people. The entire universe is made subservient to man.

Both the Quran and Sunnah are the sources of Knowledge – TRUE, AUTHENTIC AND UNIVERSAL [TAUK]..

Thus TAUK becomes the source for further knowledge.

True, authentic and universal worldview is knowable based on only TAUK. Every other view or concept is developed based on speculation and conjecture.

The faculties of human beings such as reason, the senses, intelligence, intuition and experiences including experimentation and observation become means or tools and are fully recognized and used extensively.

One of the concerns of the pioneers of IOK is the purification of methodology of Islamic thought from negative elements.

Hence, I forcefully argue that the Islamic paradigm of knowledge must protect the methodology from speculation and whims. Humanity has been unable to

rid itself or move beyond speculation, whim, and conjecture.

Human beings are in need of Islamic revealed knowledge [TAUK]. Never in history, were peoples left entirely to their own faculties, and devices. All metaphysical positions such as epistemology, ontology, axiology, cosmology and psychology, were based on TAUK.

Those who relied on TAUK created culture and civilization and those who depended on their own caused crisis and chaos and misled people.

The intellectual orientation of the followers of TAUK, throughout the ages, was directed by the principles of humanity and universality. All intellectual efforts were conducted based on the spiritual and material needs of people and were the result of the realization and acceptance of the TRUTH and Reality of life, society and the world.

In addition, the existence of Allah swt and the process of the revelation of knowledge were always taken as real as this world. This true observation and realization of the metaphysical truth and reality prevented Muslims from placing undue dependence upon the self and speculation.

All epistemological issues were dealt based on the TRUTH and the REALITY of the existence of Allah swt, on one side, and on the other, the availability of knowledge - true, authentic and universal - TAUK along with

constant examination, scrutiny and revision as demanded by circumstances.

Due to the above process and approach whatever scholarship was developed by a generation of scholars was subject to analysis, criticism and creativity. It was never considered as final and authoritative for another generation.

Every issue and piece of knowledge was open for further investigation, consideration and improvement to the right of other generations.

TAUK never allowed its users to view knowledge as power and source of exploitation or domination.

Knowledge was always connected with values and morals. All epistemological norms were developed based on the integration of TRUTH, universality, humanity, continued examination and analysis, values and morals.

The principle of unity of knowledge was the key concept which directed all intellectual efforts in a comprehensive and holistic manner. It means knowledge was and is universal and integrally related to all aspects of life, society and the world.

The articulation of an intellectual alternative to the modern world is one of the fundamental challenges to the Muslim ummah. It is an urgent and imperative challenge. Any kind of transformation and development is not possible without coordinated intellectual efforts.

This alternative articulation would guarantee the development of Islamic civilization that will enable Muslims to rebuild the ummah and lead the humanity.

Redefinition of knowledge, science, method based on Islamic epistemology is the need of IOK project.

All knowledge is derived and produced based on TAUK. As per the Islamic theory of knowledge [epistemology] the tangible universe is taken as the creation of Allah swt and studied with the application and use of reason, sense perception and experiment in the light of the TAUK.

No piece of knowledge is considered as true and worthy of acceptance if it is not furnished with the evidence from the TAUK.

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